Bobber the Water Safety Dog says:

1. Always wear your life jacket while around water.
2. Never swim alone
3. Don't dive into lake waters without first checking for underwater hazards.
4. Don't take unnecessary chances.

HELP SAVE A TREE – Return trail guide to rack for re-use.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Philpott Lake Visitor Assistance Center
1058 Philpott Dam Road
Bassett VA 24055

Telephone: (276) 629-2703
Fax: (276) 629-3493
E-mail: philpott@usace.army.mil
Website: www.saw.usace.army.mil/philpott/index.htm

Philpott F.I.T.

(Fitness Interpretive Trail)

Philpott Lake

Introduction: Welcome to the ½ mile (one-way) Philpott Fitness Interpretive Trail (F.I.T.). Use this trail guide to learn about the features identified by the numbered trail markers along your walk. Not only can you learn a lot about Nature and your environment, but you can also get in shape and stay fit on our unique trail. While enjoying nature, take advantage of the exercises offered at the twenty fitness stations along the trail. **Be sure to closely follow the instructions provided at each station and be sure to do all the stretches to help prevent pulled or torn muscles.** Try all the exercises. You may not be able to do all of them at first, but use the trail three times a week, and you'll soon be a pro. When you reach the end of the trail, enjoy a brisk walk back to your vehicle. **It is always recommended that you should consult your physician before starting any exercise program.**

You may keep this guide, or recycle it by returning the guide for others to use. We hope you will continue to learn about our natural and cultural resources. Remember: good hikers take only pictures and leave only tracks! Pack it in – pack it out!

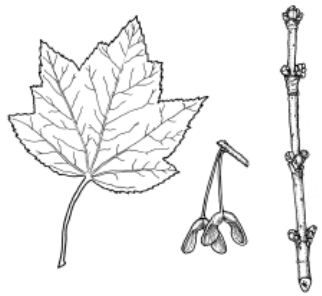
We invite you to check out our displays at the Visitor Center!

25. Out – Not Up! Trees must compete with each other for space to grow. In the woods, trees are close together. As a result, their shape is usually more compact with narrow canopies. The large trees in front of you are characteristic of trees which grew up in more open areas. This area was once likely an old field or home site. The trees had room to grow very wide canopies with long branches reaching out like tentacles in all directions. In other words, they grew out, not up!

26. Eastern White Pine: The Eastern White Pine's wood is light colored, of medium strength, and has straight grain. It has many industrial uses including building lumber, cabinet making, furniture, and interior finishing. White Pines are also grown in Virginia for Christmas trees. Birds and squirrels love the seeds produced in the long cones of the White Pine. In the Philpott Lake area, White Pines may reach a height of 200 feet and may grow to three feet in diameter, making it the largest conifer in eastern North America. During Colonial times, the Eastern White Pine's great height put it in great demand to produce masts for early ships.

23. Rotting Logs: Trees, like all plants and animals, will eventually cease to live. A tree may die of old age or it may have its life cut short by disease, insect infestation, fire, weather damage, or by harvest for human use. The fallen tree like you see here and throughout the woods, still serves a valuable purpose, even after death. They look "dead" and useless, but they are actually teaming with life. As the tree decays, it becomes food and home for thousands of insects. The insects are eaten by reptiles, birds, rodents, other insects, and even the black bears that roam the Philpott forests. The nutrients that were stored in the tree are returned to the soil as the tree decays into soil humus and help to provide a fertile location for future trees to grow, starting the life cycle all over again.

24. American Beech: The American Beech produces a fruit (beech nuts) contained in a prickly bur about ¾ inch long. Each bur contains 2 nuts. The nuts are eaten by many birds and mammals including mice, squirrels, chipmunks, black bear, deer, foxes, grouse and ducks. Many of the older trees, which can reach a height of eighty feet and a diameter of three feet, become hollow, making excellent homes for wildlife. The Beech's wood is very hard, strong and tough. However, it is not durable when exposed to weather. The wood is used for furniture, flooring, rough lumber, tools, baskets, and charcoal. The American Beech's wood also has some medicinal value.

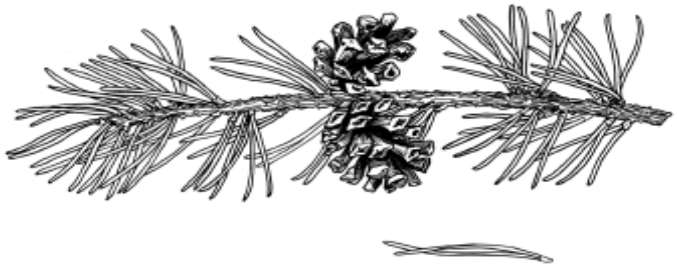


2. Red Maple: The Red Maple offers some of the most spectacular fall colors of any tree in the Blue Ridge Mountains with its brilliant orange and scarlet leaves. Its winged shaped seeds fall to the ground like little helicopters, providing food for birds, squirrels, and other rodents. Deer also feed on young Red Maple sprouts. The wood is softer than the other maple species and is somewhat weak. However, it still has value in the furniture and paper industries. Red Maples with their large crowns and 90 foot heights make popular shade and ornamental trees. The Red Maple is the most tolerant to soil variation and conditions of any tree in North America, making it common in many regions

3. Black Gum: The Black Gum tree generally grows to heights of 40-60 feet with a 1-2 foot diameter. The wood is very tough, cross-grained, hard to work, and warps easily. It can be used for containers, crossties, rough flooring and pulpwood. Sections of trunk were used in colonial days as "bee gums," or places for bees to make their hives. Many species of birds and wildlife eat the fruit, and bees use the nectar to make honey. Black gum heartwood often rots, creating dens for wildlife, including black bears. The fall foliage makes black gum an attractive landscape tree.

4. Mountain Laurel: Mountain Laurel is an evergreen, many-stemmed, thicket-forming shrub or sometimes a small tree with a short, crooked trunk. It has stout, spreading branches, a compact, rounded crown and beautiful, large, pink flower clusters. Mountain Laurel is one of the most beautiful native flowering shrubs and is displayed as an ornamental in many parks. The stamens of the flowers have an odd, spring-like mechanism which spreads pollen when tripped by a bee. The wood has been used for tool handles and turnery, and the burls, or hard knot-like growths, for briar tobacco pipes.

Warning : Leaves and flowers contain poisonous substances & should not be eaten by humans or animals.



5. Virginia Pine: The Virginia Pine's lumber is used in rough construction, however it warps very easily during wet and dry cycles. Its long, woody fibers make it excellent for paper production. The Virginia Pine has cones which mature and drop their seeds in two years. But the cones can remain on the tree for several years after the seeds fall. Small songbirds love the seeds and thick stands of young Virginia Pine make an ideal place for birds to roost. Deer also like to feed on the young foliage. Because of the Virginia Pine's ability to grow in very poor soil, the tree has been used in plantings to reclaim areas which have been stripped mined. In recent years, pine bark beetles have devastated stands of Virginia Pine around the Philpott Lake area.

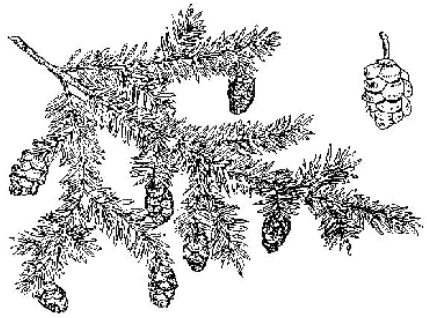
21. Yellow Poplar: This tree grows tall and straight. The Yellow Poplar can reach heights over 200 feet with diameters of greater than 3 feet. The shape of the yellow blooms in the Spring resemble a tulip, thus giving the Yellow Poplar one of its common names, the tulip tree. The wood is soft and very easy to work. The wood is used in a variety of products including building lumber, veneers, paper pulp, chip board, plywood, and framing for furniture products. The Yellow Poplar is a very important tree for the local sawmilling industry. Deer, birds and small mammals feed off of various parts of the tree. The bark is a favorite food of Philpott's beaver population. Bees make a tasty honey from the blossoms and the Yellow Poplar makes an ideal tree for shade and landscaping.

22. Woodpecker Tree: What caused this snag (standing dead tree) to die? Did someone carve their initials in the bark and allow bacteria or some disease to attack the tree? Did they get struck by lightning? Did heavy ice or strong winds break the tops out? Any of these things could have happened. But the value of the trees didn't stop when it died. Look at all the holes. After the tree died, it was attacked by insects. The holes you see were made by woodpeckers searching for a tasty insect treat. And don't be surprised if a critter takes up residence in one of these holes. Someday, this snag will fall and will become a rotting log; it will return its stored nutrients to the soil.

19. Nature's Pruning: Mature trees which are left unharvested and undisturbed develop thick canopies which overlap each other, completely blocking sunlight from reaching the ground. In such a mature forest, there is little or no undergrowth, resulting in the lack of browse for deer and cover for smaller wildlife. Nature has a way of pruning mature forests to keep a diversity of species growing to support the soil, the water sheds, and the wildlife. Nature uses well aimed lightening strikes, windstorms, and ice storms to eliminate trees and thin canopies to open up the forests and allow life fiving sunlight in. Look on the ground around you to see evidence of nature's pruning.

20. RUNNING CEDAR: Running Cedar grows in forests where the soil is somewhat dry and where there are a lot of dead leaves on the ground. Running Cedars spreads by its rhizomes which are stems that grow sideways under the dead leaves and send up new Running Cedar plants. Small animals such as spiders, frogs, and salamanders depend on Running Cedar to provide cover from predators. Running Cedar is closely related to ferns. Sometimes people collect Running Cedar during the holidays to make wreaths and other decorations. In some states overharvest has caused it to be a protected plant. It is against Corps of Engineers Regulations to pick and/or remove any vegetation without a Permit.

6. Hydroelectric power: The power lines you see are carrying electricity produced by Philpott Dam's generators. The electricity will be used to heat homes, power our TV's and computers, and keep our factories running. Unlike coal fired power plants which contribute to air pollution and global warming or nuclear plants which generate large quantities of radioactive wastes, hydroelectric power is very clean and very efficient. Come to our Visitor Center to learn more about Philpott Dam's purpose and history.



7. Eastern Hemlock: The rarely harvested Hemlock's wood is light, brittle and very hard to work. Hemlock bark was once used as a source of tannin for the leather industry. Dense Hemlock stands are frequently used as cover by deer, grouse and many other wildlife species. Hemlock is one of Virginia's most shade tolerant trees and can live over 800 years. Unfortunately, an invasive insect species, the woolly adelgid, is causing the death of large stands of Hemlocks throughout their range.

8. Flowering White Dogwood: Did you know that the White Dogwood tree is the state tree AND the state flower for Virginia? The brown to red wood is hard, heavy, strong and very close-grained. It was once used for textile shuttles and spools and for handles and mallets, but is seldom harvested today. Although the fruit is poisonous if eaten by humans, more than 35 species of birds and many large and small mammals are known to eat them. Deer and rabbits browse the foliage and twigs. Dogwood is planted as an attractive ornamental tree.

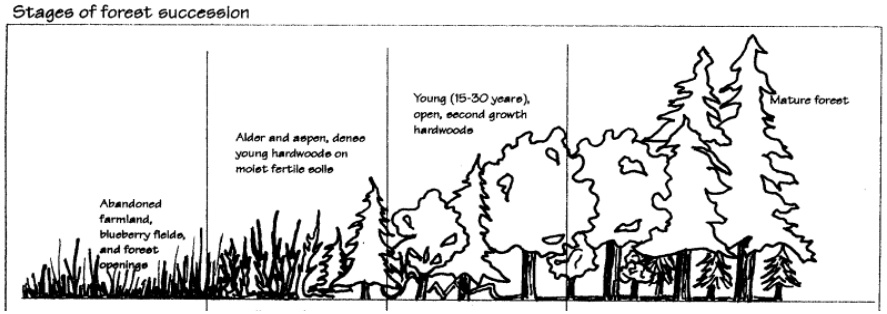
9. Sourwood: The Sourwood is found throughout southern Virginia. The tree is usually leaning and is poorly formed with many crooked branches. It reaches a maximum height of 40 feet and a diameter of 12 inches. The wood is heavy and hard with a compact grain. It is sometimes used for handles, but most often for firewood and pulp for paper. In the Spring, white urn shaped flowers adorn the tree. Bees use the flower's nectar to make a highly sought after light colored honey. Sourwood trees are sometimes planted as an ornamental and they naturally spread over cutover land.

17. White Quartz: These white quartz rocks are typical of the naturally occurring vein quartz found throughout Virginia's mountains. This quartz is usually a milky white color and is very hard and durable. The black or reddish staining is from iron oxide and/or manganese. White quartz is used in cast concrete products and as a decorative stone around bushes, trees, flowers, and driveways. White quartz was very valuable to Native Americans to fabricate arrowheads, spear points, and other tools.

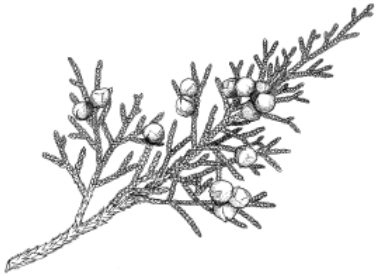
17. Poison Ivy: Leaves of three, let it be! Hairy vine, no friend of mine! Raggy rope, don't be a dope! All are old rhymes to remind people to stay away from Poison Ivy. Poison Ivy stems, vines, leaves and roots contain urushiol, an oily substance which binds to the skin on contact. Urushiol causes an allergic reaction to the skin which develops into reddish inflammation, a bumpy rash, and blistering, all accompanied by annoying itching. Serious reactions can occur internally from breathing smoke where Poison Ivy is being burned or if it is eaten, Urushinol can be transferred to humans from pets which have come in contact with Poison Ivy. Even dead leaves and vines may produce reactions for years!

15. Invasive Vines: Invasive vines, such as Japanese Honeysuckle and Porcelain Berry were introduced from the Orient. Invasive vines spread quickly and shade out native shrubs and young trees. Like all invasive species, whether plant, animal, or disease pathogens, invasive vines have no natural enemies and outcompete native species for water and nutrients. Invasive Vines can cause malformed tree trunks, suppression of ground plants, and major impacts or wildlife habitats.

16. Autumn Olive: Autumn Olive, another invasive plant, was introduced to the United States from Japan in 1830. An Autumn Olive shrub can produce up to 80 pounds of berries in a single year. These berries contain seeds which are widely dispersed by birds. The Autumn Olive is now found all over the eastern half of the United States. The Autumn Olive, in its effort to take over, actually has the capability to adversely affect the nitrogen cycle upon which many mature plants depend. To learn how an invasive fungus caused one of the greatest environmental disasters to ever hit North America, visit the American Chestnut display between our Visitor Center and the Overlook.



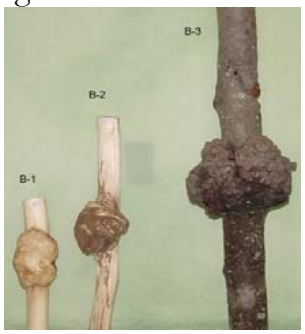
10. Forest Succession: When the ground is disturbed to bare earth by natural or man made means, a process called succession begins. Grasses and low growing plants first appear. As time passes, shrubs will appear, usually shading the grasses causing their eventual disappearance. In the Philpott area, Virginia and White Pines begin to grow, eventually out competing the shrubs. Finally, taller growing trees overshadow the pines and stand for hundreds of years as a mature forest, if left undisturbed. In this area of Virginia, mature forests are characterized by oaks and hickories.



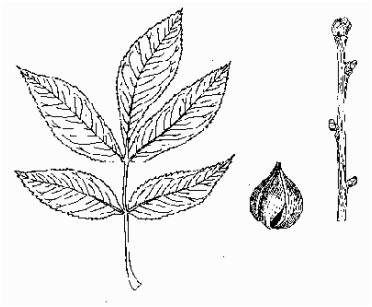
11. Eastern Redcedar: The Eastern Redcedar is found in all parts of Virginia. It is often seen growing in abandoned fields and along roadsides. The wood is fragrant, soft, and strong. The red heartwood and white sapwood produce beautiful effects when finished. Because the heartwood is resistant to decay, the Redcedar makes excellent posts, poles, cabinets, and chests. The natural oils produced in the wood repel insects. It is often used as paneling for closets and cedar shavings make excellent pet bedding material. The berry-like cones are a favorite food of many song and game birds from waxwings to quail. The thick foliage provides excellent cover for nesting and roosting birds. Redcedars are also good for protecting soils from erosion.

12. White Oak: The majestic white oak can reach a height of 100 feet and a diameter of 4 feet. Found all over Virginia, the white oak is a very important tree for wildlife around the Philpott Lake area. It produces acorns which are preferred by deer, bears, turkeys and various other small animals. The wood is heavy and strong. Its close grain lumber makes it highly sought after to produce barrels, tools, furniture, and flooring for homes. A substance called tyloses plugs the vessels in the wood, making it water-tight. This trait made the white oak's lumber ideal for early ship-building.

The injury on the side of this tree has developed into a "Plant Burl".



Burls are fast growing, abnormal growths on trees. A burl is usually found, like the one on this tree, in the form of a rounded outgrowth on the tree trunk. A burl results from a tree that has some form of environmental stress. Burls can be caused by injury, bacteria, or by insect infestations. Many burls actually grow underground on the tree roots. This type of burl usually goes undiscovered until the tree falls over. Some burls reach enormous size attaining heights of over 6 feet. The grain of the burl grows in a very deformed manner creating beautiful patterns that may be used for household items, picture frames, veneers in furniture, and automobile interior trim. However, because of the irregular grain growth, the wood is hard to work.



13. Pignut Hickory: Pignut Hickories are found all over Virginia. Their wood is very heavy, strong, hard, and flexible, making it ideal for tool handles, items requiring impact resistance, skis, and firewood. The nuts are a favorite food of squirrels, white-tailed deer, bears, and other wildlife. Mature trees can reach a height of 75 feet and a diameter of 3 feet. Early settlers named the species "pignut" because their hogs loved to eat the nuts. Because of its flexibility, Native Americans used the wood to fabricate their bows for hunting.

~Cross Road. Go about 30 yards up hill and reenter trail~

14. Tree of Heaven: Ailanthus commonly called the Tree of Heaven is an invasive tree which was introduced from China. Invasive means that it spreads rapidly and chokes out our native species that wildlife has come to depend on. Over 100 invasive species have been identified in Virginia. A mature Tree of Heaven produces chemicals that prevent the establishment of other plant species nearby. Invasive species are difficult to control or get rid of. If a Tree of Heaven is cut, multiple trees will sprout from the root system. You will see more invasive species as you continue your walk.